Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-20 (canceled)

Claim 21 (new): A system for controlling a telecommunications network comprising:

a first switch fabric, situated within the telecommunications network, for controlling connections in the telecommunications network; the first switch fabric having:

first and second ports; and

third and fourth ports each connected to either a second switch fabric, situated within the telecommunications network, or a corresponding one of a plurality of peripheral apparatus;

a bridging circuit contained within the telecommunications network and connected between the first and second ports; and

a computer apparatus arranged to communicate with the first port for controlling a first connection between the bridging circuit and a first one of the peripheral apparatus and to communicate with the second port for controlling a second connection between the bridging circuit and a second one of the peripheral apparatus such that, as a result of communication between the computer apparatus and first switch fabric, the first and second connections, are

established and bridged by and within the telecommunications network.

Claim 22 (new): The system recited in claim 21 wherein:

each of the first, second, third and fourth ports has a control section and a voice data section;

the control section of the first and second ports communicates, via first and second links, respectively, with the computer apparatus; and

the bridging circuit is connected between the voice data sections of the first and second ports.

Claim 23 (new): The system recited in claim 22 wherein:

the computer apparatus is arranged to send a first control command to the first port, via the first control link, for controlling the first connection between the bridging circuit and the first peripheral apparatus; and

the computer apparatus is arranged to send a second control command to the second port, via the second control link, for controlling the second connection between the bridging circuit and the second peripheral apparatus.

Claim 24 (new): The system recited in claim 21 wherein the first and second ports support multiple bridging circuits; and the system comprises a plurality of bridging circuits with at least two of the bridging circuits being combined in a common trunk.

Claim 25 (new): The system recited in claim 22 wherein the first and second control links are combined in a control network.

Claim 26 (new): The system recited in claim 21 wherein the first switch fabric comprises a single telecommunications switch.

Claim 27 (new): The system recited in claim 21 wherein the first switch fabric comprises first and second telecommunications switches with the first switch having the first and third ports, and the second switch having the second and fourth ports.

Claim 28 (new): The system recited in claim 21 wherein the computer apparatus is arranged to receive control signals from the first switch fabric.

Claim 29 (new): The system recited in claim 28 wherein the computer apparatus is arranged to pass control signals from the first and second ports to the second and first ports, respectively.

Claim 30 (new): The system recited in claim 28 wherein the computer apparatus is arranged to perform a corresponding service upon receipt of one of the control signals from the first switch fabric.

Claim 31 (new): The system recited in claim 21 wherein the computer apparatus comprises a server.

Claim 32 (new): The system recited in claim 31 wherein:
the computer apparatus further comprises a signalling gateway arranged to communicate with the server; and

the signalling gateway comprises first and second communication ports for communicating with the control section of the first and second ports, respectively, of the first switch fabric.

Claim 33 (new): The system recited in claim 32 wherein the server communicates, through a computer network, with a user terminal.

Claim 34 (new): The system recited in claim 21 wherein the control commands comprise commands related to establishing or breaking a telecommunications connection.

Claim 35 (new): The system recited in claim 21 wherein the computer apparatus is arranged to generate a call detail record upon establishing a connection via the first or second ports to the third port.

Claim 36 (new): A method for use in a system for controlling a telecommunications network, wherein the system comprises a first switch fabric, situated within the telecommunications network, for controlling connections in the telecommunications network; the first switch fabric having first and second ports; and third and fourth ports each connected to either a second switch fabric, situated within the telecommunications network, or a corresponding one of a plurality of peripheral apparatus; a bridging circuit, contained within the telecommunications network, connected between the first and second ports; and a computer apparatus arranged to communicate with the first and second ports; the method comprising the steps, performed by the computer apparatus, of:

controlling a first connection between the bridging circuit and a first one of the peripheral apparatus;

controlling a second connection between the bridging circuit and a second one of the peripheral apparatus; and

instructing the bridging circuit to bridge the first and second connections;

such that, as a result of communication between the computer apparatus and first switch fabric, the first and second connections, are established and bridged by and within the telecommunications network.

Claim 37 (new): The method recited in claim 36 further comprising the steps, performed by the computer apparatus, of:

controlling the first connection by sending a first control command to the first port; and

controlling the second connection by sending a second control command to the second port.

Claim 38 (new): The method recited in claim 37 further comprising the step of bridging the first and second connections through use of corresponding circuits in the bridging circuit.

Claim 39 (new): The method recited in claim 36 further comprising the step of sending a control command from the computer apparatus to the first switch fabric upon receipt of a user command from a user, the computer apparatus comprising a server communicating with the first switch fabric and the server communicating, via a computer network, with a user terminal through which the user issues the user command.

Claim 40 (new): The method recited in claim 39 further comprising the steps of:

receiving a call by the first switch fabric at the third port;

sending a control command from the first switch fabric to the server; and

communicating a response from the server to the user terminal upon receipt of the command from the first switch fabric.